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## Meet The Next Wave: 22 Artists Who Will Shape 2022

From UK drill to Gen Z pop via dreamy songwriting and genre-busting

punk . . .

It's never been harder for musicians to make themselves heard amid the noise.

If a new survey from our American cousins is to be believed, archive catalogue releases represented **some 82% of streaming demand**

(<https://twitter.com/tedgioia/status/1479644437617782784>), leaving new artists with a market share of under a fifth.

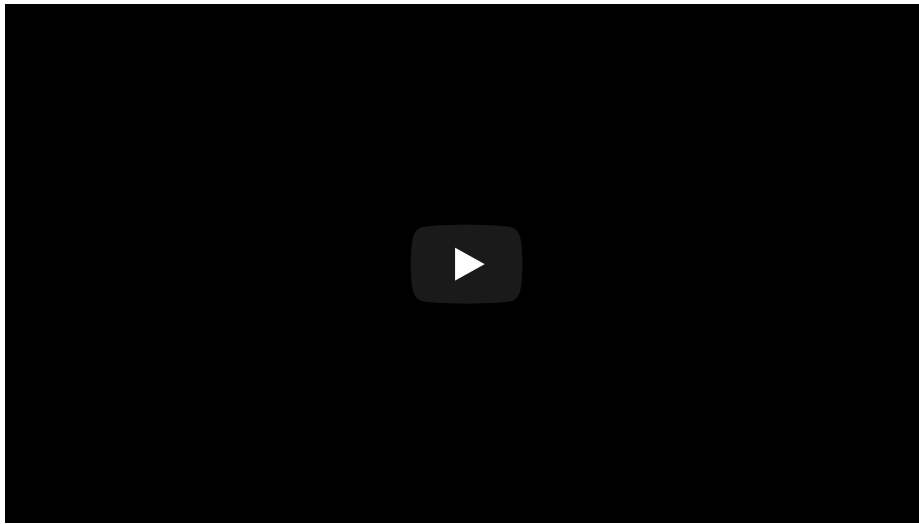
While there's a lot to unpack here, the point is clear: if we want music to continue to progress, to challenge, and to invigorate the times we're living in, then we need to platform and champion new music.

With daily posts, weekly playlist updates, and comprehensive in-depth features Next Wave is our space to do exactly that - it's a hub for outsiders, mavericks, ne'er-do-wells and endless dreamers to speak up, and make their voices heard.

Here, the Clash team round up 22 artists who could define 2022.

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## April



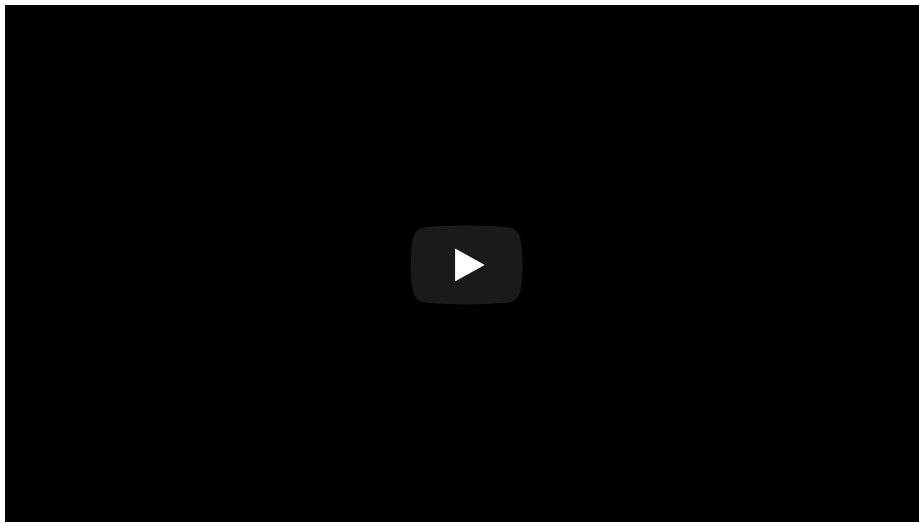
Irish alt-pop talent April arrived immaculately fully formed. An artist who felt assured in her own skin, April's identity – breathlessly outspoken, immediately addictive – was marked by confidence in her own material, and the direction those early releases could take her.

2022 opens with a major label deal, courtesy of Atlantic Records, and a slew of new releases. Singles such as 'Piece Of Me' and 'Someone That I Made' upped the ante yet again, the sound of a precocious alt-pop vocalist challenging herself on every single front. Powerful and pointed pop songwriting, April's finessed use of melody manages to locate personal spaces inside intimately familiar structures, forcing you to look again at her creations.

Refusing to be hemmed in, April's stratospheric path is going to take her to undreamt of locations. (*Robin Murray*)

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## Cathy Jain



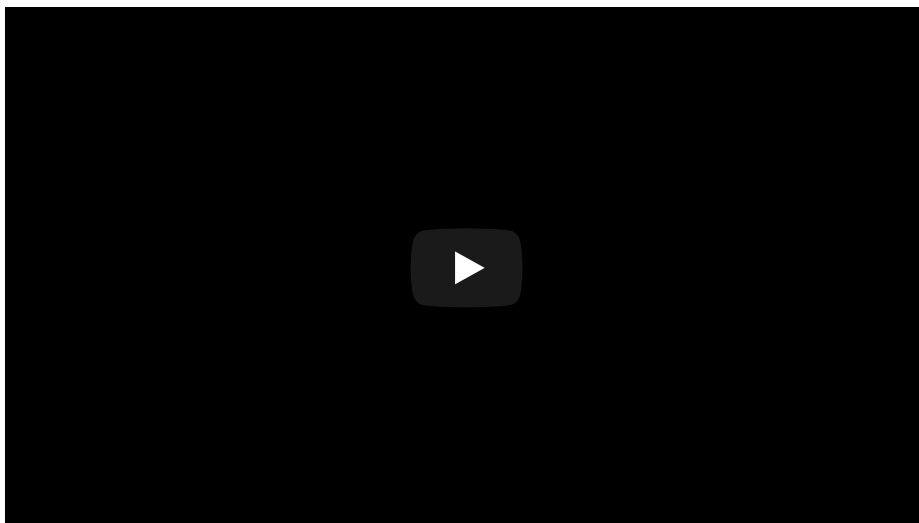
Cathy Jain is one of the youngest artists on our list – but she’s also one of the most exciting. Only 17 years old, she’s set to pack out venues she couldn’t buy a pint in, with her precocious alt-pop catching the ear of key tastemaker imprint YALA! Records.

Debut EP ‘artificial’ was a remarkable, confident, extremely rounded release, balancing personal revelation against some stunning alt-pop moments. Making her festival debut at Latitude, she’s making real strides with each passing day as all the pent up energy and potential finally reaches a point of realisation.

Marrying the cinematic nostalgia of Lana Del Rey to the precocious communication of Billie Eilish, Cathy Jain thrives through ignoring the rules – where she goes next is up to her, and she’s more than earned that right. *(Robin Murray)*

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### Clavish



North London’s Clavish first grabbed listeners’ attention back in 2018 with a viral freestyle that showcased his unhurried delivery and smart wordplay. A string of singles and customary appearances on heavyweight platforms followed, with a 2019 Mad About Bars freestyle and a Daily Duppy in 2020 creating even more buzz around his name. A full length project felt like the missing piece to the puzzle.

Clavish finally delivered that in December with ‘2022’ - a concise five-track EP which points towards even bigger things this year. With drill dominating the UK rap scene to the point of saturation, Clavish’s steady, smooth glide over productions places him in the road rap lane, with a world weary maturity that belies his age. The EPs introspective closer ‘I ain’t gonna lie’ sums him up perfectly.

“Look in the mirror back to real life I’m kinda stressed but laugh it off, I’m okay cause what you gonna do if I say I’m not?” he asks. *(Robert Kazandjian)*

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## DoRoad



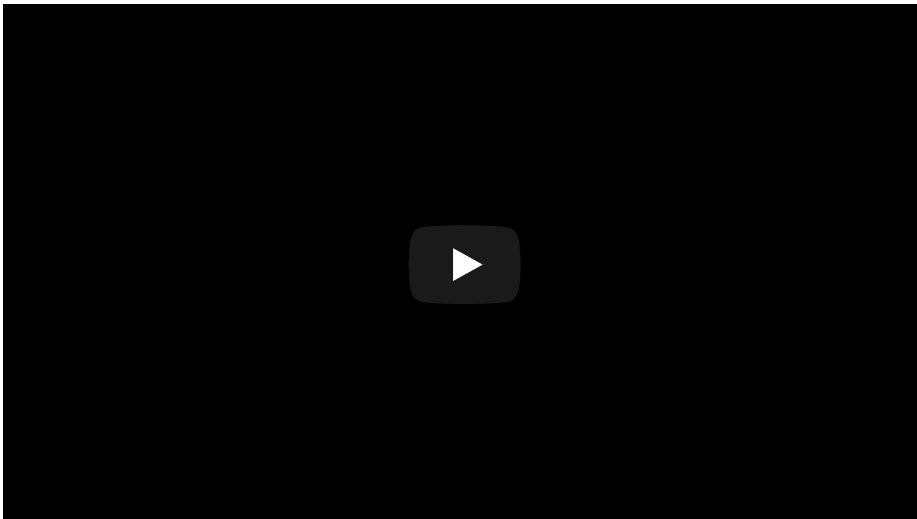
Gipsy Hill driller DoRoad had a huge 2021. He stole the show twice on scene godfather K-Trap's excellent 'Trap' tape with a pair of explosive, unforgettable verses. As the wider U.K drill sound became increasingly commercialised, his sparring with K-Trap on 'Maths' and 'RRR' felt like a throwback to the genre's roots.

His solo cuts 'No Miming' and 'War with Me' doubled down on the rawness, with enough grease to fry a whole pig. Menace and street talk isn't all the masked MC brings to the table though; he's a subtly gifted lyricist, hustling intricate rhyming patterns and slick wordplay into his conversational flow.

For listeners craving UK drill at its most uncompromising, DoRoad has you covered this year. *(Robert Kazandjian)*

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## 5EB

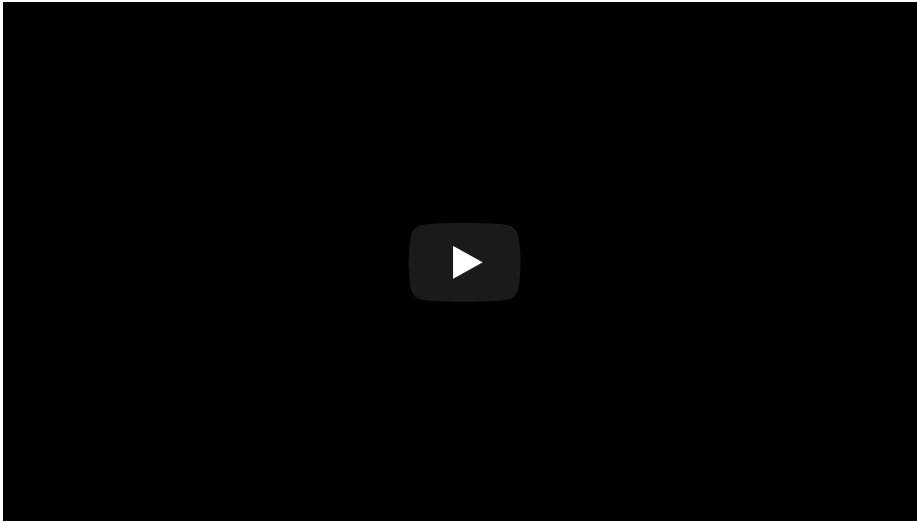


The North London prodigy, 5EB - although he's been making music for a hot minute - is on the brink of blowing. Posing as one of the many multi-talented trailblazers in the UK's "underground" scene, it's almost impossible to box 5EB into one specific sound. Reputable for his versatility, effortless swagger, and distinct flair, the rising artist dropped an un-skipable project last year named, 'FENDISIVE' that blew supporters away. From the up-beat sounds of 'TRIBE' to the atmospheric waves of 'BTC' alongside fellow rap-climber Ashbeck - you can throw any beat at 5EB and it's guaranteed he'll body it!

Having recently started producing beats due to lockdown and with over 250 songs in the vault, his cult-like and eager following have aided sold-out shows and a buzz that can no longer be ignored. Through creating a world of his own, it's only a matter of time until he gains his deserved recognition. *(Elle Evans)*

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## Flowerovlove

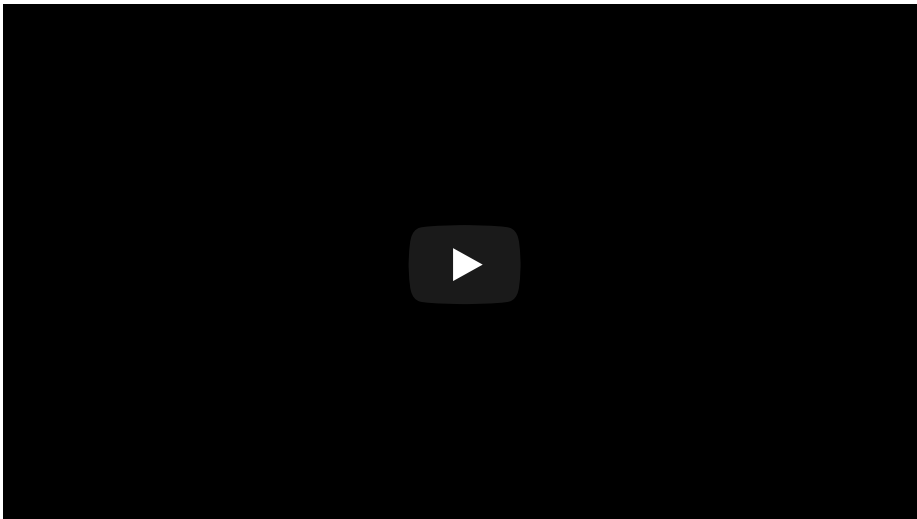


Joyce Cisse AKA Flowerovlove is the next Gen Z prodigy were touting for big things, a teen sensation fashioning breezy, gravity-defying gems - the aural equivalent of traipsing through meadows barefoot without a single care in the world. Flowerovlove is a product of her generation: she began recording songs as a pre-teen before turning her passion for writing into a viable career; you'll see her consciously modelling sustainable garms in bucolic locations, curated to tease enough of her personality without compromising her mystique.

Her ethos is rooted in preservation, both the self and the natural world we inhabit. Her Elysian charm is undeniable, bubbling to the surface on songs like 'Well Aware' from her debut EP 'Think Flower' and the hazy soul of new single 'Saturday Yawning'. If you're seeking tales of disaffected youth and a dose of sleepy, synthesised nostalgia without the overcooked nihilism that dulls so much of the DIY scene today, Flowerovlove is a golden-hued blossom ready to bloom for you. *(Shahzaib Hussain)*

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## Gabriels

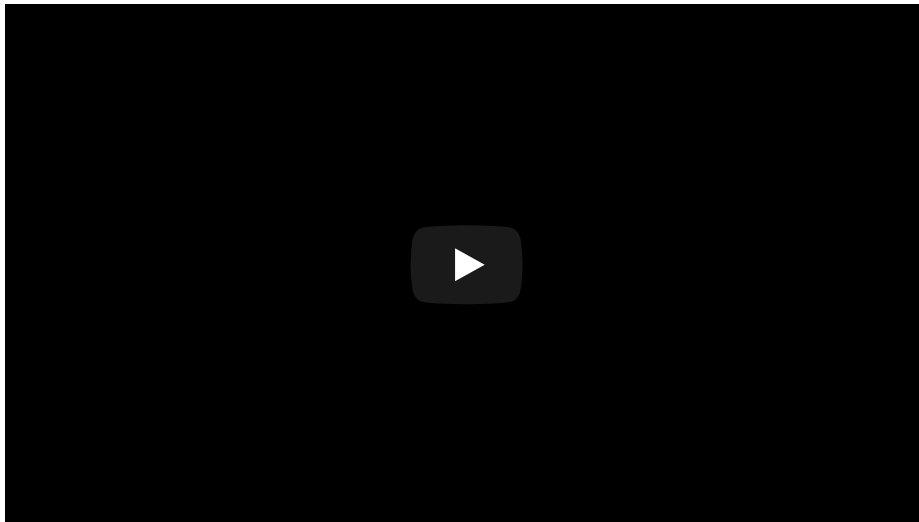


LA based Gabriels caught hold during the darkest days of the pandemic, with their gospel-soaked future-soul ear-worm 'Love And Hate In A Different Time' offering a glimpse of common humanity during those endless hours of isolation. Gradually stepping out of the shadows, two superlative EPs have revealed Gabriels to be so much more than a one song prospect, while a recent flurry of London shows illustrates the strength of their music's connection with gig-starved fans.

There's much more to come, too. A UK stint saw breathless recording sessions, with the group easing into a fresh phase. Set to support former Clash cover star Celeste on her cross-country tour, Gabriels are ready to step out into the light. Crafting inspirational soul anthems that refuse to be categorised, singer Jacob Lusk could yet emerge as 2022's defining voice. *(Robin Murray)*

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## Hamond

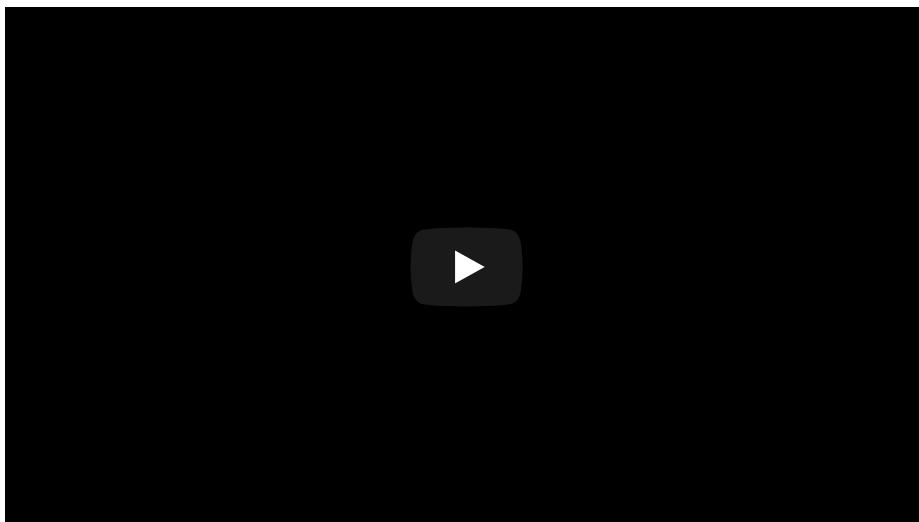


This Houston polymath merged the sub-bass sorcery of James Blake with the digital funk of Miguel on 2020 project ‘Source Material’: The Artful Dodger-sampling deep cut ‘Hotel Zaza’ an emblem of his love of UKG samples, PC music and contemporary R&B anecdotes. The EP as a whole solidified his presence as a future soul star on tastemaker lists but bar a few standalone releases since - ‘Windows’ is a remedial recommendation to cure the Winter blues – Hamond has largely stayed away from the limelight.

That’s all about to change. If you’ve been following the multi-instrumentalist on Insta, an enticing reel of future material has been shared via snippets, ephemera and cryptic photo dumps. With a triumphant, slow-release torch track titled ‘Angels’ teasing a new project on the horizon, expect a shift away from the insular strain of affected electro-R&B into more exultant, earthier territory. No longer hiding behind the reverb and brooding distortions, Hamond is ready to delineate his own space in music. Remember his name. *(Shahzaib Hussain)*

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## Jeshi



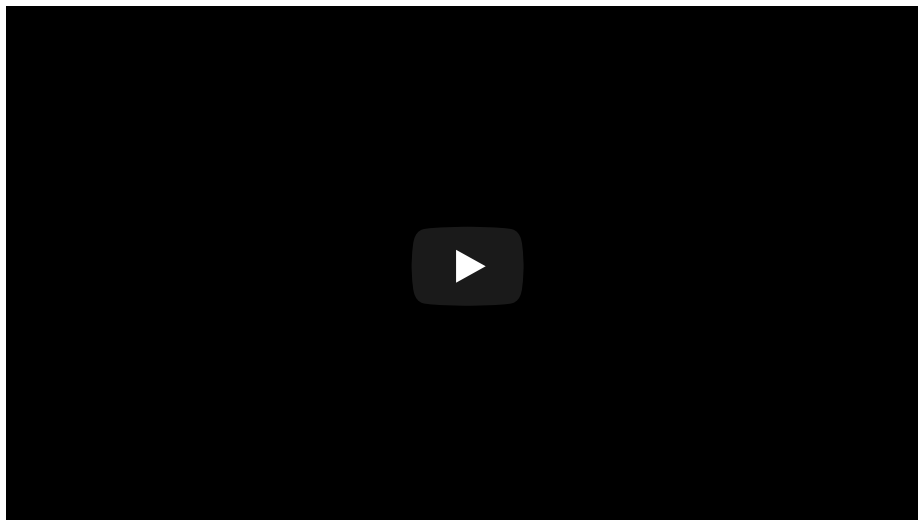
Hailing from Walthamstow, Jeshi paints the world around him through bitter-sweet instrumentals and raw, fragmented bars. It is a journey of both self-discovery and attempting to understand his environment, one that started at the age of 11, stepping off a bus with a school-friend who was making his own music at the time. There is an inherent darkness in Jeshi’s sound, yet a natural instinct for self-assurance which has pushed the east Londoner onto the road he envisioned himself throughout his adolescence, now working with the likes of Celeste, Vegyn and touring with slowthai.

Recent single ‘Generation’ grapples with the wide-spread issues that plague Jeshi’s society, from drug addictions to the delusional nature of social media. Directed by Brock Neal

Roberts, the music-video aligns itself visually with the track's lyrics, placing the listener by a windowsill, observing a youth that has been unknowingly exposed to too much, far too early. Simultaneously reflecting and forward-thinking, this is no doubt that Jeshi is one to look out for this year. (*Ana Lamond*)

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### **Léa Sen**

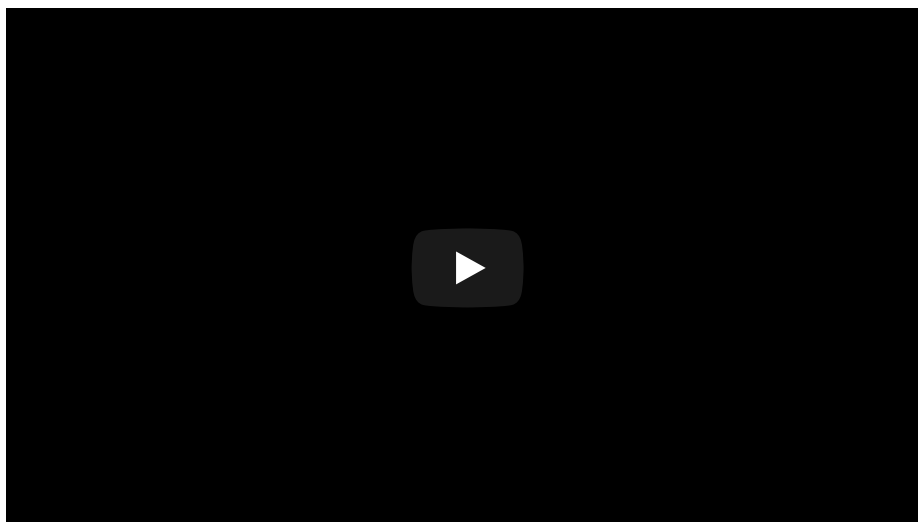


The London-based, French-Caribbean artist's recent solo offerings teased a sepia-tinged world where solitary mistiness and seductive melancholy prevailed; the heartsick minimalism of 'Sand Radio' and Nick Hakim-inflected psychedelia of 'Locked In' combined poignant lyricism over easy listening chords. But Sen can also up the ante, finding home within genre-pulverising multitudes; her serene vocal can be heard on the downcast dub anthemics of 'Better', from Joy Orbison's 2021 opus 'Still Slipping Vol 1'.

Having teased her re-introduction to music with a new EP this year, expect her name to join the likes of George Riley and Nilüfer Yanya on the frontier of bruised alt-soul; one eye on elegies to 21st century romance and another on the communal release found in the electronic world. Refined yet raw, inscrutable but also unadorned, watch as Sen delivers solace through a carefully-honed sound. (*Shahzaib Hussain*)

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### **Lucy Blue**



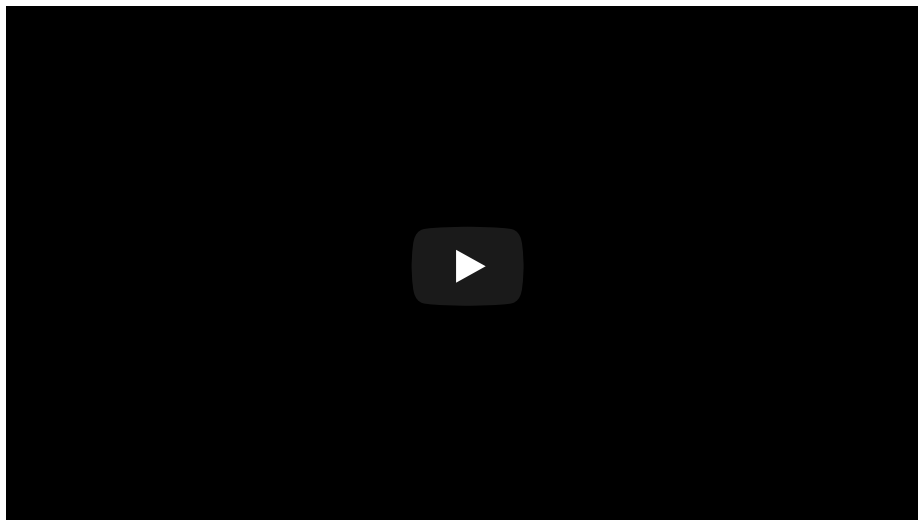
Everything Lucy Blue touches is surrounded by the halo of the uncanny. Dreamy songwriting that feels intimate familiar, her alt-pop template veers from Cocteau Twins hallucinations through to the Hollywood motifs that adorn Lana Del Rey's best work, all viewed through a highly individual lens.

Debut EP 'Fishbowl' was a terrific introduction, with songs like 'First Man On The Moon' ably illustrating her evocative songwriting prowess. Music laden in colour and style, Lucy Blue's

slim but immaculate catalogue to date spills out of the unconsciousness, illuminating the more mysterious aspects of our daily lives in blinding white light. An artist who isn't set to be contained, the coming 12 months will undoubtedly see Lucy Blue make her mark in emphatic style with releases to savour, and live shows to inspire. *(Robin Murray)*

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#### **Miso Extra**



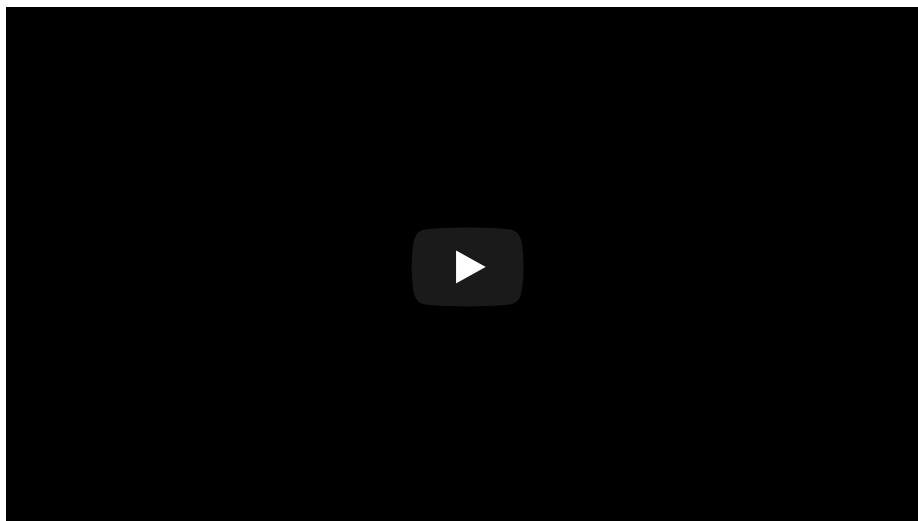
English-Japanese producer and rapper Miso Extra is immersing the world into her 'Misoverse,' championing a dynamic production and self-expression. Using her sound to channel her dual heritage, the London-based riser weaves between both languages through her words, which capture both personal experiences, and those of society. There is a haunting, yet charming quality to single '1013,' where Miso engages with the struggles presented by 2020 over glitchy accordions and bustling drums.

On the other hand, tracks like 'Adventures of Tricky N Duke' are sweet to their euphoric core, capturing the joys of a blossoming friendship. Miso notes a range of influences from anime, Bend It Like Beckham, and M.I.A to MF DOOM, which have undoubtedly shaped her experimental approach, one that isn't afraid to merge the unexpected across her music.

Last year served as an introduction to the live experience, performing at both Liverpool Sound City and Pitchfork Music Festival Paris, alongside local events, pushing Miso Extra's artistry further and building an anticipation for the year ahead. *(Ana Lamond)*

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#### **namesbliss**



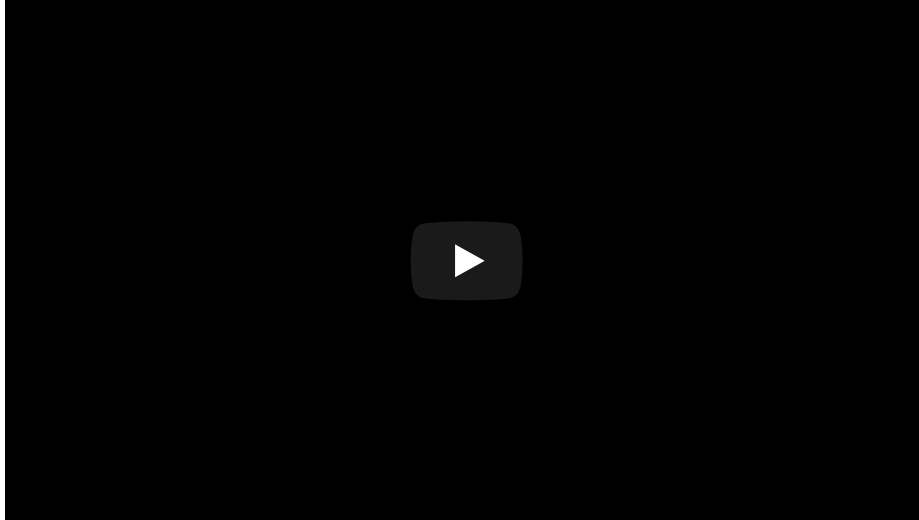
Officially active since 2018, namesbliss offers an important counterweight to the violent themes which entice many listeners towards U.K rap and drill, the majority of whom have no lived experience, proximity or understanding of the violence depicted in artists' lyrics. As well as being a bewilderingly skilled, storytelling emcee, namesbliss works in a leadership

role at a creative college in East London, mentoring vulnerable young people.

In November he dropped 'Light Of Mine' - a seven-track EP that sees those two worlds coalesce, resulting in something that's purposeful, profound and musically banging too. namesbliss raps at a pace that nods to his beginnings in grime, but with a novelist's eye for detail, spinning cautionary tales that speak to the mountains vulnerable young people are expected to overcome just to survive. With big things in music and beyond already locked in this year, he's determined to use his voice for the greater good. *(Robert Kazandjian)*

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### **Nino SLG**

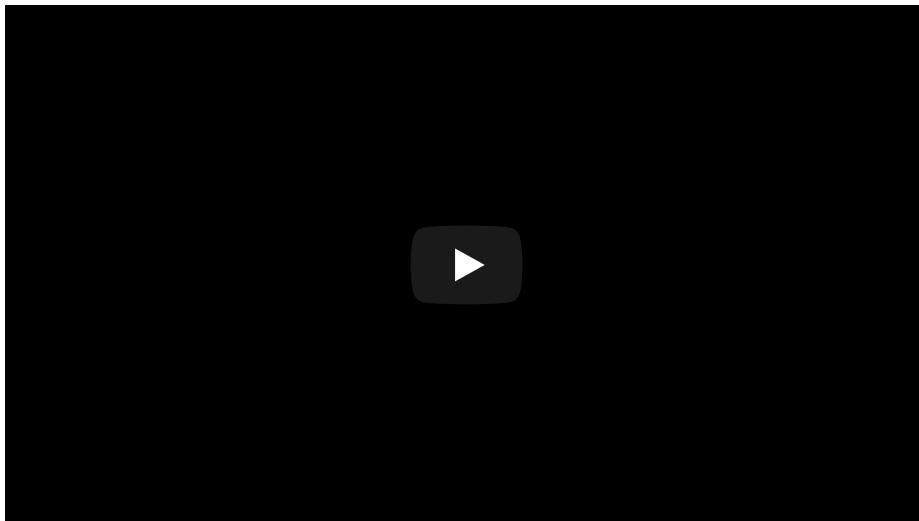


A promising emcee that has delivered a continuous stream of honest, raw, and effortless music that covers societal issues and everyday life, it's safe to say Nino SLG's creativity and intelligence speaks for itself. The rising 16-year-old has caught the attention of many across the nation over the past 12 months following on from his debut single in 2020 named, 'House Invasions', that instantly shook some industry feathers!

Although, writing bars isn't where it stops! His love for piano and poetry – which he's won awards for, must I add – has helped sharpen his artistry over the years. Pushing through yet another successful 12 months with the release of his 'State Of Mind' EP, a six track capsule of goodness that further exploits his potential to become a household name has solidified him as an artist to watch this 2022. *(Elle Evans)*

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### **Obongjayar**



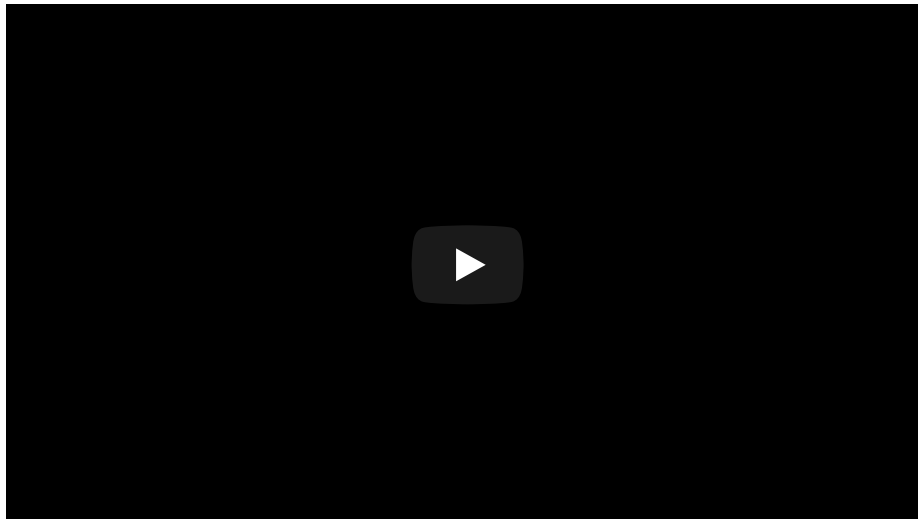
Steven Umoh, otherwise known as Obongjayar has been steadily rising to the forefront with a sound that captures his journey. Born in Nigeria, the distinctive voice moved to London at the age of 17, yet it was only later, in Norwich, where he started to truly hone in on his musical inclinations. Blending both his personal cultural experiences and influences,

Obongjayar fuses the traditional with the contemporary, the instrumentation of afrobeat and electronic rhythms into something he defines as ‘post-Afro.’

Yet, there is a spontaneous quality to the 27-year old’s artistry, particularly on last year’s collaborative EP Sweetness, where Obongjayar and Sarz leapt back into 80’s R&B. Although the recent months have propelled Obongjayar into the critical radars of many, awarded for the potently smokey ‘God’s Own Children’ at the last Ivor Novello Awards, one is to expect the unexpected from his captivating energy. *(Ana Lamond)*

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### Qendresa

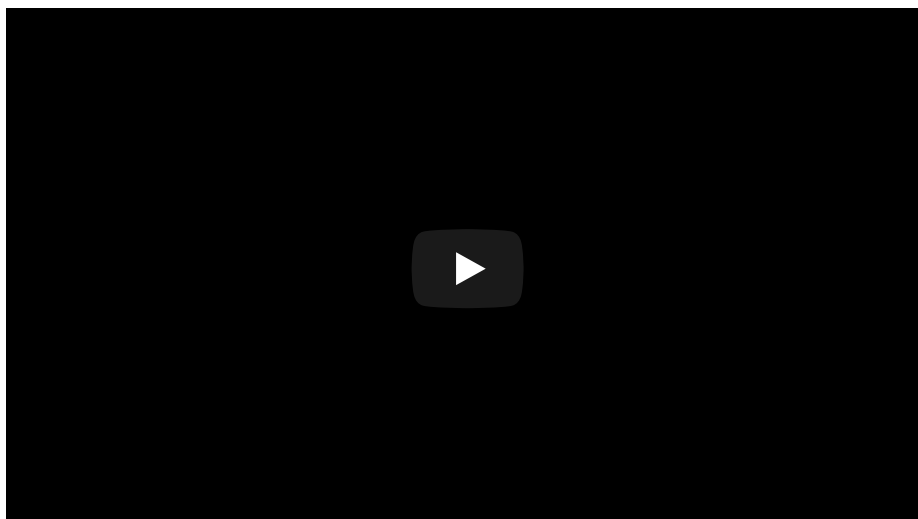


North London’s Qendresa is navigating 21st century life through the lens of 80’s R&B and soul. 2020’s EP ‘Midnight Request Line’ pinpoints a time where the riser embraced her own production skills, channeling her struggles with romance and betrayal through lush, sensual vocals and nostalgic synth grooves. At Qendresa’s core, is an urge to speak to those who may not have industry support or advantages, proving that greatness is within oneself and remains in evolution.

Last year saw the vocalist and producer strengthen a relationship with her own culture, spending six months in Kosovo where she filmed visuals for ‘Karma,’ a track that steered Qendresa in new directions. Fusing elements of Trap within her production, the double single experiments with a more hard-hitting sound, welcoming a rap style that wards off previous flawed friendships and malicious energies. As Qendresa’s artistry expands, she incorporates influences old and new, further establishing herself within her own lane. *(Ana Lamond)*

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### QuinzeQuinze



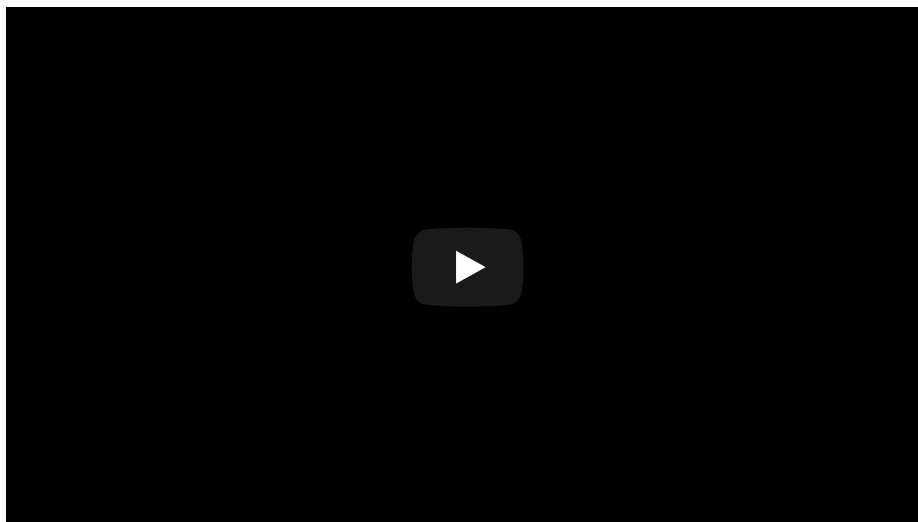
This interdisciplinary collective turned musical quintet sit firmly in the hinterlands of the

progressive Parisian scene, representing the criss-crossing mobility of underground movements grounded in social diversity and immigrant identity. Previous EPs ‘NevaNeva’ and ‘La Jeune’, filtered Polynesian folklore through cascading trip hop-indebted rhythms and world music percussion; the result was a ceremonial take on dance music, retaining a sense of sibylline spirituality where earthly and astral entities are inextricably tied.

With a seven-track project ‘Vārua’ (“spirit” in Tahitian) arriving soon, teased by the Balearic odyssey, ‘Le Bleu’, this collective are venturing even further down the arcane path into primordial territory. Having previewed the EP, I can attest to their virtuosity but also their aptitude for creating autonomous spaces for marginalised voices, a counterpoint to the restrictive whims of normative gatekeepers in music. Brace yourselves for a polyglot ride through the cosmos. *(Shahzaib Hussain)*

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#### **SIPHO.**



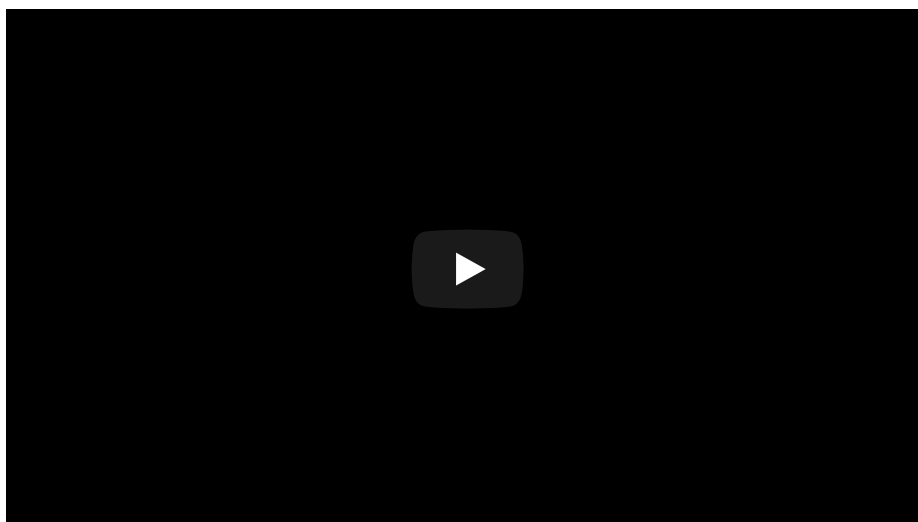
When Birmingham’s SIPHO. stepped on set with Clash for a Next Wave shoot last year, everyone was immediately entranced by his energy. Bubbly, hilarious, and inviting, his personal warmth seemed to place equal measures on the stories of those around him, with SIPHO. very naturally welcoming us into his world.

Of course, it helps that his artistry is so strong. Beautifully pointed songwriting that thrives on ruthless autobiography, those R&B drenched tones are worth comparing to Frank Ocean or D’Angelo in their impact, while we’re hearing signs of an adolescence spent tuning into indie radio, too.

With each show taking him closer to his much-vaunted goals, few would bet against SIPHO. entrancing all who encounter his path in the coming 12 months. *(Robin Murray)*

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#### **Tariq Disu**

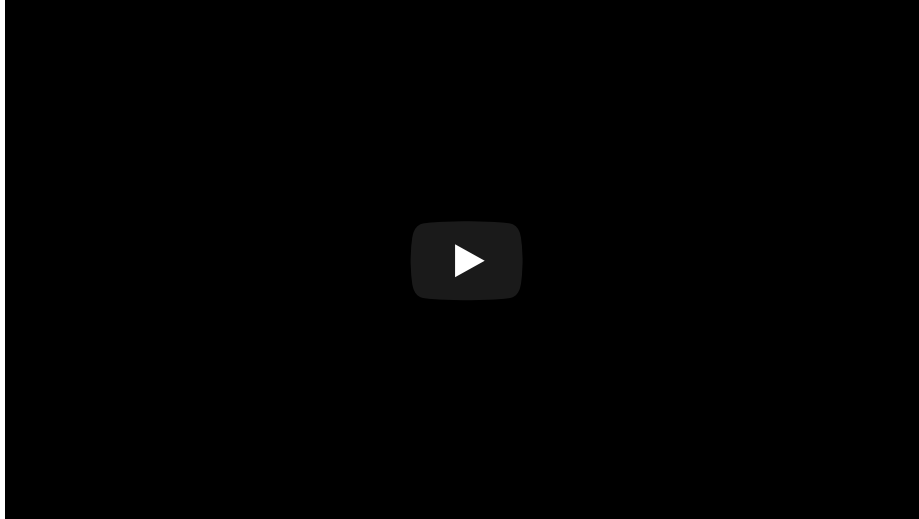


South London continues its monopoly as an incubator for not only forward-projecting rap but self-styled creatives overseeing every sub-section of their art. Next up is Tariq Disu, a master craftsman who prior to breaking out on his own racked up production credits for the likes of Knucks, Lava La Rue and R&B crossover star Ella Mai.

His solo work is where tangible glory resides, however. An itinerant spirit (Disu grew up between Ghana, US and London) comes through in wavy anthems that bridge SoundCloud-era emo rap with obscure but classic vignette-laden samples that would make Madlib proud. New project 'GW', short for Generational Wealth, merges free associative wordplay with nocturnal beats that evoke the lurid, metropolitan feeling of growing up in the shadow of the city. 'GW' is a sedative to cope with the effects of living between the demons of a past and a future where possibility and potential converge. With Tariq Disu there is more than meets the eye. *(Shahzaib Hussain)*

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#### **TeeZee**



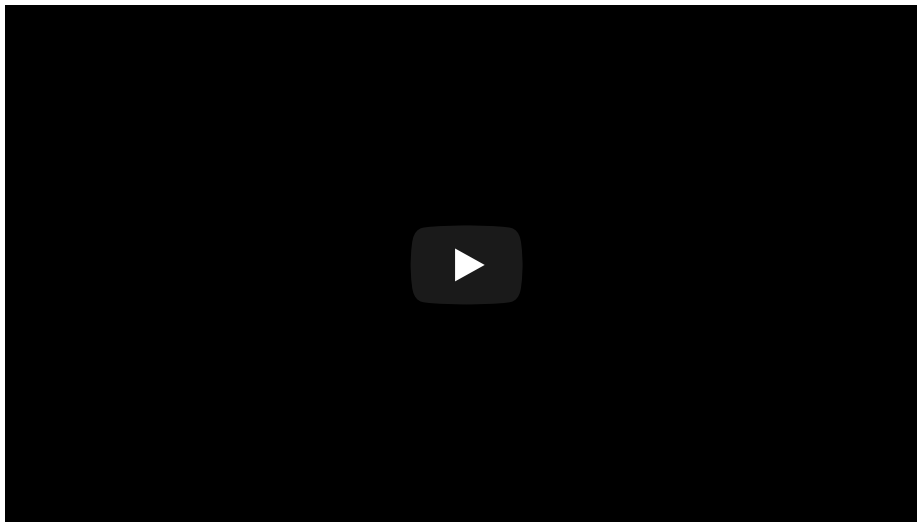
Nigerian-born Afro-fusion artist Teezee brings a wealth of vigorous ideas to music and culture on a wide scale. One of the pioneering forces of West Africa's alté movement, the rising star looks set to take the world by storm.

Currently dividing his time between London and Lagos, the plan is to let his all-consuming sound influence us at the start of 2022. Having spent a large chunk of 2021 completing, perfecting the creative fuel of his debut EP - 'Arrested By Love' is due for release early this year.

With storytelling at the heart of his songs, Teezee's music is emotionally and culturally resonant in equal measure. On an ongoing mission to break down barriers that relate to genre or convention, he demonstrates a passion for collaboration, a quality that is bound to play out in his coming releases with vibrant artist collaborations transcending borders, nationality, and politics. *(Susan Hansen)*

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#### **Wet Leg**

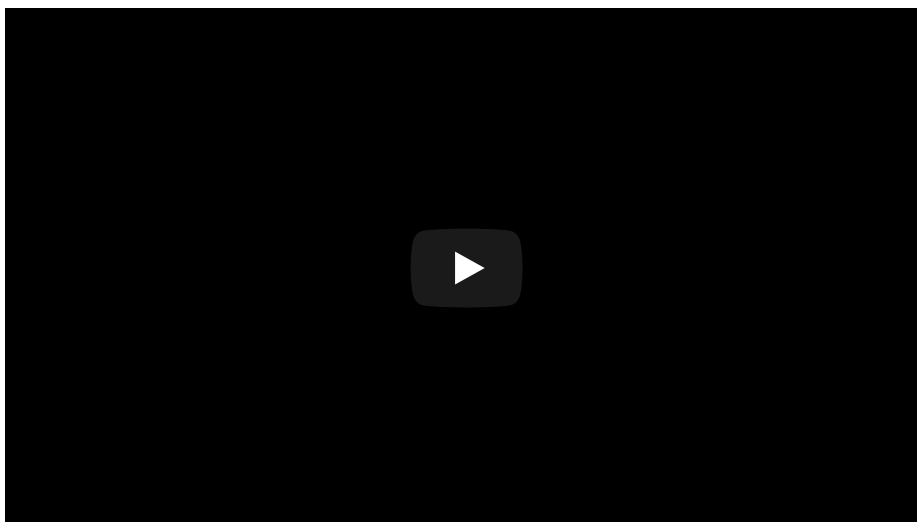


In the space of only two tracks Isle of Wight duo Wet Leg seized their place as one of the country's most talked about new acts. On record, the pair are all sharp angles, pop nous, and filthy sarcasm, surreal yet totally engaging. Live, they're little more than exceptional, a string of unreleased cuts blending together in a whirlwind of precocious promise and shy yet completing overwhelming stage craft.

2022 is going to be their year. With a debut album on the horizon – self-titled, natch – Wet Leg promise to inject femininity and humour into a UK guitar scene that feels increasingly blokey and self-satisfied. With each new release marked by incredible visuals, Wet Leg are a proposition that work on every level – prepare yourself for your new addiction. *(Robin Murray)*

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### **Willow Kayne**



Whisper it, but underneath the chaos that permeates Willow Kayne's work lies a soul that knows exactly what its doing. The London-via-Bristol artist matches a raw, DIY energy to pop prowess, overhauling definitions in the process. Pulling down the barricades, Willow Kayne has become a viral star, with debut single 'Two Seater' sneaking its way on to the FIFA 2021 soundtrack.

But it's not all stats and headlines – Willow Kayne is speaking from the hearth. Six track debut EP 'Playground Antics' is her coming of age moment, making incisions into pop's past in order to chart its future. A disruptive talent worth filing alongside M.I.A. or even Santigold, she remains a brilliantly bratty Gen Z voice holding her middle finger up to convention. *(Robin Murray)*

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### **#Next Wave**

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